

Remarks

This is in response to the Office Action dated October 1, 2004.

Before discussing the merits of the case, the examiner's attention is respectfully directed to the fact that the form PTO-1449 submitted with the IDS dated March 16, 2001 was not returned with the aforementioned Office Action. The undersigned contacted the examiner on or about October 4, 2004, and was informed by the examiner that in view of the IDENT system implemented by the U.S. PTO, the examiner at that time would need to reaccess the case and the PTO-1449 form will be faxed to the undersigned. So far that has not happened. Therefore, the examiner is respectfully requested to send with the next communication to the applicants, the initialed PTO-1449 form for the IDS filed on March 16, 2001.

Per the above amendment, claims 1, 2, 6 and 22 have been amended; and claims 3-5, 7-21 and 23-25 cancelled. The claims remain pending in this application are therefore claims 1, 2, 6 and 22, as amended.

Support for the above amendments to claims 1, 2, 6, and 22 are provided in the description of the second embodiment of this invention (pages 32-42 and Fig. 4 of the specification).

The features of the inventions of amended claims 1, 2, 6, and 22 are, as pointed out on for example page 40, line 18 to page 42, line 3 of the specification, as follows.

1) One of different levels of at least one of copyright protection and information secrecy is assigned to the contents-information handling apparatus. The contents-information handling apparatus stores a first certificate contents-information piece which is copyrighted and which is representative of said one of the different levels. The first certificate contents-information piece is transmitted from the contents-information handling apparatus to the authentication apparatus.

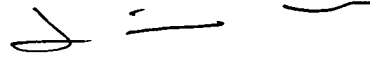
2) The authentication apparatus stores second certificate contents-information pieces which are representative of the different levels respectively and which are copyrighted.

3) In the authentication apparatus, the transmitted first certificate contents-information piece is compared with the second certificate contents-information pieces to decide whether or not the transmitted first certificate contents-information piece is equaled to one of the second certificate contents-information pieces (step S305 in Fig. 4). In the authentication apparatus, the transmitted first certificate contents-information piece is indicated when it is decided that the transmitted first certificate contents-information piece is equaled to one of the second certificate contents-information pieces (step S307 in Fig. 4).

It is respectfully submitted that Stefik et al (US Patent No. 5,629,980) do not teach the above features 1), 2), and 3) of the inventions of amended claims 1, 2, 6, and 22. In particular, Stefik et al do not teach the first and second certificate contents-information pieces which are copyrighted, and do not teach that the transmitted first certificate contents-information piece is indicated when it is decided that the transmitted first certificate contents-information piece is equal to one of the second certificate contents-information pieces. It should be noted that the first certificate contents-information piece is different from the contents information to be transmitted from the authentication apparatus to the contents-information handling apparatus.

Therefore, it is further respectfully submitted that the amended claims 1, 2, 6, and 22 are patentable over Stefik et al.

Respectfully submitted,



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